

California Bay-Delta Authority Committee  
Drinking Water Subcommittee  
Minutes  
Meeting of May 19, 2005

The Drinking Water Subcommittee met on May 19 from 11:00 am to 2:00 pm at the CALFED offices in Sacramento. From 11:00 to 1:00 pm, the meeting was held jointly with the Ecosystem Restoration Subcommittee, whose meeting was already in progress. ERS chair Gary Bobker welcomed DWS members. DWS chair Greg Gartrell announced that DWS members Steve Macaulay and Walt Wadlow had been recently appointed to the BDPAC. Greg asked attendees to introduce themselves. A list from the voluntary sign-in sheet follows the meeting summary.

***Meeting Summary***

Notes from April 1, 2005

Lynda Smith provided edits to the section describing her presentation on the Southern California Regional Plan. Revised notes will be provided at the next DWS meeting for final approval.

Ecosystem Restoration Multi-Year Program Plan

Gary Bobker provided a summary of the ER Multi-Year Program Plan. He noted that there are a number of high priority projects, many of which address the issue of fish decline in the Delta. At the next ERS meeting in June, the Subcommittee will focus on refining the plan so that it includes a status report of current project funding, provides a contingency plan for funding projects that address unexpected needs/concerns, recommends improved science, and explains the concept of adaptive management.

Drinking Water Multi-Year Program Plan

Lisa Holm informed meeting attendees of additions to the Multi-Year Program Plan and next steps for its completion. New components of the Plan include updated finance tables, a schedule graphic of water quality activities, revamped Accomplishments and Major Activities sections, and a graphic displaying the geographical distribution of water quality program activities. After finance and budget questions have been answered, the plan will be adjusted accordingly. The next draft will be available to Subcommittee members via email in early July. Recommendations will be adopted at the July DWS meeting. The final plan will be then presented to the BDPAC. It is expected that the Authority will adopt it at its August meeting.

Water Quality Program Assessment

Cindy Paulson and Sarahann Dow, Brown and Caldwell, provided the group with a review of the soon to be final Water Quality Program Assessment. Hard copies of section four (Conclusions and Recommendations) from the document, a draft summary of the assessment for the BDPAC, and handouts of the Team's PowerPoint presentation were provided to meeting participants.

Cindy reminded DWS members of previous presentations of earlier versions of the draft. She explained that the assessment process began with surveys and interviews with project managers. Section 2 provides an assessment of existing Delta water quality. Initially, four main sites were selected for analysis and the two constituents of primary concern to the WQP, organic carbon and bromide, were measured. The revised report analyses additional intakes and constituents of

concern, including nitrogen. The revised report takes a broader look and incorporates new analysis tools such as “fingerprinting” to provide a more comprehensive characterization of Delta water quality. Data related to flow, which establishes the framework for water quality, and electrical conductivity is also analyzed in the report.

Cindy showed a graph indicating that the ROD target for bromide was consistently exceeded during the monitoring period at all sites except the North Bay Aqueduct. The ROD target for total organic carbon was also exceeded, with measurements for organic carbon highest in the spring. Cindy explained that dissolved organic carbon (DOC) rather than total organic carbon (TOC) was analyzed in the report because data for DOC are more widely available. DOC data are also considered to be more accurate and representative.

Cindy explained the three levels of performance indicators that have been developed by the CALFED Science Program to measure progress. The first level of indicators includes administrative measures and address project funding. Approximately \$80 million has been spent on funding projects with benefits to water quality, including some projects funded by the ERP. A bar chart displayed the amount of grant funds in comparison to the total budget designated for the five WQ program areas; grants for source improvement received the majority of funding, followed by science and improved understanding, regional planning, treatment technology, and institutional program management. Level two performance indicators address quantifiable accomplishments, where it is still too early to tell since about 30 projects have yet to be completed. Cindy noted that every ROD commitment is being addressed, however. Level three indicators review system-wide results. Again, it is still too early to see actual improvements in water quality and ELPH, and it is clear that ongoing efforts are needed in both target areas.

In the conclusions and recommendations section of the report, a concern voiced by numerous project managers is that the Water Quality Program has been under-funded. Insufficient staff resources and chronic shortages hamper progress. There is support for focused regional planning. Cindy stated that the Delta/San Joaquin River area is particularly sensitive and complex, but that ELPH planning would behoove any region. The WQ Program was encouraged to provide more support and targeted outreach to environmental justice and tribal communities who often don't have the resources needed to compete for grant funding.

Many project managers expressed frustration over contracting; they recommend streamlining the process, maintaining consistency, distributing funds more quickly, and guiding solicitations to focus on WQP priorities. Managers strongly requested that the WQP establish and meet realistic expectations for timing when initiating contracts. Communication recommendations include strengthening accountability by project tracking and maintaining a strong dialogue between WQP staff and project managers. More focused but less frequent reporting was suggested—quarterly reports are currently required. It was recommended to integrate all water quality objectives, including drinking water supply and ecosystem water quality. The report suggests facilitating a comprehensive water quality monitoring program for the Delta and its tributaries, and notes that there is much value in a larger agency taking the lead on such an endeavor.

A final draft version of the report will be emailed to DWS members on May 23. To finish it by the end of their contract, Brown and Caldwell requested that members provide comments by May 26. The final version will be submitted to the BDPAC on June 8. The Brown and Caldwell team is also developing a brief “white paper” Treatment Report, the draft of which will be emailed to DWS members on May 25 with comments due June 7.

Members of both Subcommittees commented that contracting and funding problems appear to affect every CALFED program—some suggested it was a state issue.

Serge Birk commented that the performance indicators might be useful as a template for other CALFED programs. He asked if projects like the VAMP provide similar benefits to Ecosystem Restoration. Lisa Holm responded that some issues cross many CALFED programs, such as the development of performance measures related to organic carbon and the Central Valley Drinking Water Policy, which will be discussed later in the meeting.

Greg Gartrell stated that a contract for any project should require feedback such as participation in an annual questionnaire. He also observed that there are many projects with similarities that would benefit from early coordination. Greg commented that a great deal of money has been spent on studies; more focus should be placed on funding “on the ground” projects that solve the many problems facing CALFED.

Members from both Subcommittees expressed frustration in that the same problems identified years ago seem to reoccur and that sometimes, the objectives of the various Subcommittees are in conflict with one another. It was reported that declining Delta fish populations is on the rise again, although strategies to improve the situation are being developed. They discussed the role of toxics from agricultural and urban activities, and drinking water quality goals. Lisa responded that now there is a desire to integrate the issues of water quality through joint Drinking Water and Ecosystem Subcommittee meetings, particularly on the pesticides/toxicity problem. Rhonda Reed agreed and stated that the Ecosystem Restoration Program Plan now shows integration. She added that an organic carbon strategy, similar to the earlier mercury strategy, is being developed and that other progress is being made on some earlier identified problems.

Pankaj Parekh asked about the stated targets for the ERP in the ROD, and their main constituents of concern. Diana Jacobs responded that there really aren't any ERP targets in ROD, and that mercury and dissolved oxygen are of main concern. Rhonda added that the water quality plan includes the objectives of the WQP and others, TMDLs, and standards of the implementing agencies. The ERP has been looking at conservation strategies to improve ecological habitat.

Serge Birk commented that the IEP is studying the declining Delta fish problem and asked if the DWS was addressing the salinity problem in the Delta. Diana Jacobs responded that a science proposal had been accepted to study salinity and its effects on biota.

Steve Macaulay thanked the Brown and Caldwell team for their effort and asked them to reinforce the notion of coordination in the Program Assessment. Echoing a comment from Pankaj Parekh, Subcommittee joint meetings like this are great and should be encouraged. Steve recommended conducting special meetings on specific topics, as well.

Lisa Holm finished the discussion by explaining that the Assessment will include a disc with a database and map of projects which can be sorted by region, constituent, etc. There will also be a summary table. All of this will be on the new WQP web site, coming soon.

#### Toxic Blue-Green Algae in the Delta

Peggy Lehman, DWR, gave the group a presentation on the emergence and negative effects of new algae in the Delta, *Microcystis Aeruginosa*. Colonies of the algae vary in size, with the individual algae resembling corn flakes. Together they form a surface layer of green flakey scum. Although new to the Delta, this algae is an international problem. Blooms are highest

between July and November. Human impacts of ingestion of water with the algae (often through recreational contact) can range from skin irritation and nausea to tumors, cancer, and death.

Between 2003 and 2004, a study was conducted on the algae. Peggy explained the goals and findings of the study. The algae were found throughout the Delta, all with toxic concentrations, particularly in shallow, standing water between September and October. It was present throughout the Delta food web and it bio-accumulates, causing liver cancer in humans and animals. Increased presence of the algae could result in serious ecosystem impacts on Delta water management, recreation, productivity, and toxicity.

In response to a question, Peggy explained that the algae could be entering nearby reservoirs because Delta water is moving through various reservoir pumps.

It was clarified that the algae prefers still water over aerated water. G. Fred Lee commented that a study from 20 years ago found that mixing distributed the algae. Peggy explained that her group plans to be involved with a larger study of the CALFED Science Program. The first year will involve a thorough literary search on the subject in 2005, after which they will sample fish, depending on funding. They will focus on hot spots to determine the most contributing factors. Vicki Fry recommended studying the causes of its sudden appearance in 1999. Steve Macaulay suggested using established sampling stations for future monitoring.

#### Stockton Dissolved Oxygen Project Update

Mark Gowdy, Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board, updated the group on the dissolved oxygen (DO) TMDL effort in Stockton. Handouts of his presentation were made available to meeting attendees. Mark explained that dissolved oxygen is impaired in the San Joaquin River between Stockton and Turner Cut. Fisheries, including migrating salmon, have been impacted. Contributing factors to the problem include oxygen demanding substances (algae and ammonia), the geometry of the Deep Water Ship Channel (DWSC), and reduced flow through the DWSC. Mark explained that a DO TMDL, required by State and federal law, must identify sources and establish load limits.

A revised DO TMDL was adopted by the CVRWQCB in January 2005, and they are taking a phased approach at implementing it. Conditional prohibition and compliance with allocations is expected by 2011. The CVRWQCB will use regulatory authority if needed to require load studies. Mark added that the CBDA could also encourage studies. To address non-load factors, there are discharge permits, Basin Plan recommendations, and alternate measures such as aeration.

Mark listed the contributions of the CBDA towards addressing the problem, which includes funding early studies and providing stakeholder support. CBDA is also funding ongoing studies, including an aeration demonstration project, and they have upcoming solicitations through the Science Program for future research. For more information, meeting participants were encouraged to visit the dissolved oxygen TMDL website ([www.sjrtmdl.org](http://www.sjrtmdl.org)) or the Regional Board website ([www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley)).

Jennifer Clary asked what role the CVRWQCB will have in the Port of Stockton's dredging plan. Mark responded that they have the authority to limit dredging and they require that a certain amount of oxygen can be moved through the channel during and after dredging.

### Central Valley Drinking Water Policy

Karen Larsen, CVRWCQB, provided a review of the development and current status of the Central Valley Drinking Water Policy. Handouts of her presentation were provided to meeting participants and a copy will be posted on the website of the Drinking Water Subcommittee (<http://calwater.ca.gov/BDPAC/Subcommittees/DrinkingWaterQualitySubcommittee2005.shtml>). Since members of the DWS have been regularly briefed on the Policy's development at nearly each DWS meeting for the past two years, the presentation was primarily for the benefit of ER Subcommittee members. Please refer to previous DWS meeting notes and CVDW Policy presentations posted on the DWQP website referred to above for more information.

In response to a question, Karen explained that results from technical studies on four high priority constituents will determine if there is enough commonality to develop a Policy to be included in a Basin Plan Amendment. The Policy Work Group will coordinate with the Ecosystem Restoration Program and Science Program when those study results are made available. It was suggested to have the CALFED Science Board conduct a technical review.

Karen was asked how the Porter-Cologne Act regulates a non-point source control issue. She responded that the Act provides a framework and tools for the policy. Karen added that a policy related to organic carbon probably will not have specific target numbers. It was explained that the policy will review and compare control of source water versus treatment at a plant.

**THIS ENDED THE JOINT-SESSION OF THE MEETING. The DWS meeting continued.**

### DWS Comments to BDPAC on Program Assessment

Lisa Holm reminded DWS members that final comments on the Assessment are due to her by May 26. She provided a draft attachment that will be submitted to the BDPAC which summarizes and provides background of the Program Assessment and other reports that will be completed by Brown and Caldwell. Lisa asked for comments on the report and attachment.

Greg Gartrell stated that the conclusions and recommendations regarding contracting problems and a need for increased coordination are right on target. Pankaj Parekh suggested adding a "lessons learned" section to what is presented to the BDPAC. The report needs to stress the need for regional planning implementation costs. Does CALFED understand how important regional planning is? Lisa responded that CALFED should understand since the concept is repeated in nearly every WQP document. However, Lisa recommended that the Subcommittee think further about the role of state and federal funding for ELPH plans. She stressed that the stakeholders need to speak out in a united voice.

Bob Neufeld expressed concern that regional planning does not appear to be as important to other CALFED Subcommittees as it is to the DWS. He commented that the ERP seems to be focused solely on the Delta, and he worries that a mixed message is being sent to law makers. Tom Zuckerman disagreed. He told the group he had met recently with Senator Michado where the importance of funding regional planning and projects like the SDIP were discussed at length, and the Senator expressed his support for such efforts. Bob responded that it seems as if much of the CALFED funding burden was going to be placed on the shoulders of water users. He stated that water providers in southern California are frustrated because they are working very hard to alleviate their problems at the regional level; they realize that the Delta is a very important source of water, but they worry that all of the CALFED focus will be on fixing the Delta. Tom stated that DWR's State Water Plan (Bulletin 160) and other major water strategies are stressing the

importance and benefits of regional planning. Steve Macaulay commented that the Water Use Efficiency and Watershed Subcommittees promote working on a regional basis.

Lisa asked the Subcommittee to submit comments on the BDPAC letter to her and Greg ASAP. She said that information from the Assessment (which is required by the ROD) and Treatment Reports will be provided to people conducting regional plans. Some members expressed concern that production of a Treatment Report might imply that this is the most important aspect of the ELPH diagram. Others worried that treatment could be fragmented because appropriate treatment options may differ according to region. Lisa responded that the Treatment Report will incorporate all sections of ELPH, and that this "white paper" will be the first of many discussions on the subject.

#### Science Board Drinking Water Panel Update

Handouts of the presentation given by Bill Glaze to the CALFED Science Board were made available to meeting participants. Due to funding constraints, Dr. Glaze was not able to attend this DWS meeting and discuss the presentation. DWS members questioned the reported negative reaction of the Science Board to the ELPH diagram. Lisa said she believed they requested further information on it. Jennifer Clary asked if Bill Glaze would be able to address the DWS in the near future. Lisa responded that no funding is available at this time, but if discreet tasks for the Science Board were to be identified, then perhaps they could find funding for their participation. Karen Schwinn reminded the group that the Water Management Board and Independent Science Board are still available to provide limited expertise. The Subcommittee was reminded that after the end of June, there will be very little funding available for many CALFED efforts.

#### WQCP Periodic Review Comments

An outline of a proposed letter to the State Water Resources Control Board was provided to Subcommittee members for review. Comments are due back to Greg by June 1, with a final letter expected to be sent to the SWRCB on June 3.

#### Agenda Planning for Next Year

Draft dates, locations, themes, and agenda items for the next year of DWS meetings were presented. Moving to a bi-monthly schedule, the next DWS meeting is scheduled for July 22 with the EJ Subcommittee in Richmond. It was stated that the agenda for that meeting appears to be too long. Lisa asked that members review the entire draft list and provide her with comments.

#### Public Comment

There was no comment from the public.

#### ***Partial List of Attendees for the DWS Meeting 5-19-05***

The following Drinking Water Subcommittee members participated the meeting:

1. Jennifer Clary
2. Vicki Fry
3. Greg Gartrell
4. Steve Macaulay
5. Robert Neufeld

6. Pankaj Parekh
7. David Tompkins
8. Tom Zuckerman

Other meeting participants, including ERS members:

9. Bridget Adams (ERS)
10. Bev Anderson-Abbs (ERS)
11. Ara Azhederian
12. Joel Benegar (ERS)
13. Serge Birk (ERS)
14. J Blakeslu
15. Gary Bobker (ERS)
16. Elizabeth Borowiec
17. Marina Brand (ERS)
18. Kristen Carter
19. James Chinchio (ERS)
20. Bill Crooks
21. Patricia Fernandez
22. Dave Forkel
23. Lloyd Fryer (ERS)
24. David Fullerton (ERS)
25. Paul Gilbert-Snyder
26. Sam Harader
27. Elise Holland (ERS)
28. Lisa Holm
29. Ed Horton
30. Shana Kaplan (ERS)
31. Karen Larsen
32. Peggy Lehman
33. Chris Leininger (ERS)
34. G. Fred Lee
35. Todd Manley (ERS)
36. Jennifer Martin (ERS)
37. John Ohlson (ERS)
38. Lowell Ploss (ERS)
39. Anthony Saracino (ERS)
40. Karen Schwinn
41. Rick Sitts (ERS)
42. Lynda Smith
43. Emma Suarez (ERS)
44. Bernice Sullivan (ERS)
45. Ken Trott (ERS)
46. Frank Wernette (ERS)
47. Carolyn Yale